

The 914th Airlift Wing

NIAGARA

FRONTIERSMAN



July 2003

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION

VOL 40, NO 7

Welcome Home



Commanders Column

By Col. Wade Farris
Commander, 914 AW

My column this month has two themes, one happy and the other not so happy. This month's themes are welcome home and goodbye. First the welcome home. I'm sure most of you know that our folks in the Desert returned home last week. They return after almost four months supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. While there, they conducted themselves in an outstanding manner, setting the example for the other units they were stationed with. While others sat around and complained about the poor conditions, our guys and gals rolled up their sleeves and went to work. Our maintainers kept the airplanes flying in spite of dust storms and extreme heat. The flight crews were the most qualified in the theatre so they drew the toughest missions. In short, the 914th and Niagara Falls has greatly enhanced its reputation as a unit that knows how to get the job done!

Now, although we have the majority of our folks back home, let's not forget that we have over 40 deployed with more deploying this week. It's obviously not over and Niagara personnel are still playing a major role all over the world.

OK, now for the not so happy stuff. As I'm sure most of you know, I am being reassigned to Westover Air Reserve Base in August. Although we are excited about the new challenge, Kim and I are sad to be leaving Niagara Falls. There is a sense of family here more than anywhere else we have been and we feel fortunate to have become part of that family.

As I look back over the last two and a half years, I am very proud of the things you all have accomplished. We passed our inspections with flying colors including a top ranked HSI and the best Stan Eval inspection the inspectors had ever seen. We exceeded our flying time goals for two years in a row and met and exceeded our recruiting and retention goals as well. Over the last two plus years we have

become very involved in the community. Our participation in United Way events made a significant difference in their success including this year's food drive that netted more food than any other area in the entire country! We also saw our CFC contributions more than double during this time.

After Sept 11, 2001 we saw our world change significantly. The 914th met every challenge that came with that change. Our Security forces were activated and kept the Base secure while many of them deployed. Other personnel from all over the Wing were also activated and deployed and served with distinction wherever they were assigned. Finally, we activated and deployed our aviation package, over 200 personnel and six of our airplanes. We made the decision to get our Initial Response from the AMC IG out of the way during the deployment and we impressed them with our performance. In short, the Wing has done a superb job during this critical time in our Nation's history.

I could go on for many more paragraphs listing all your accomplishments during my stay here. However, as I prepare to leave I want to remind you that it doesn't matter who occupies this office, the PEOPLE here at the 914th are what make things happen and make it the best.

Kim and I are grateful to have been a part of this Wing and this community for the short time we were here. We also appreciate all the support you all gave us during this time. I leave here knowing that this is absolutely the best job I have had, and probably will have, in my life. The primary reason for this is the quality and character of the people in the 914th! THANKS.



NIAGARA FRONTIERSMAN

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On the cover:

MSgt. Tom Freitas gets a hug from his daughter. 914 AW aircraft and personnel returned to Niagara after a four month deployment to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. See additional photos on page 5.

Photo By: TSgt. Chris Boswell



Chief of staff thanks Reserve for Operation Iraqi Freedom support

EDITOR'S NOTE: Gen. John P. Jumper, Air Force Chief of Staff, sent the following letter to Lt. Gen. James E. Sherrard III, commander of Air Force Reserve Command.

Dear General Sherrard

The men and women of Air Force Reserve Command performed superbly during Operation Iraqi Freedom. The world witnessed joint warfighting at its best and the critical role played by well-trained and well-led airmen.

Airmen from the Reserve were pivotal to the coalition's successes in the war. Our nation's military was able to achieve rapid victory because of the dedicated service of these great citizen airmen. The loyalty and courage displayed to their nation is a model for all airmen to follow.

Please relay my sincere appreciation to all the members of your command. May God bless our great Air Force and our great nation!

Gen. John P. Jumper
Air Force Chief of Staff



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC

27 May 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR AFRC CV
ARPC CC

FROM: HQ USAF-RE
1150 Air Force Pentagon
Washington DC 20330-1150

SUBJECT: CSAF Letter, 12 May 03

It is with great pride that I forward the attached letter from General Jumper. Please forward my most sincere appreciation and congratulations to all our members for their support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Their service has been magnificent.

When the major battles are over, the ongoing operations will continue to require the support and assistance from our Air Force, and I am confident that the men and women of Air Force Reserve Command will provide the needed assistance and support to ensure success.

To all the men and women of Air Force Reserve Command -- Well Done!!!

JAMES E. SHERRARD III, Lt Gen, USAF
Chief of Air Force Reserve

Attachment:
CSAF Ltr, 12 May 03

New joint installations to reflect multi-service use

By 2nd Lt. Lance Patterson
Air Force Reserve Command Public Affairs

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. - This summer nine Air Force Reserve Command installations will be re-designated joint bases or stations to reflect the multi-service use of the facilities.

Lt. Gen. James E. Sherrard III, AFRC commander, initiated the change. At his suggestion, the civil engineer at Headquarters AFRC completed a survey of the installations where the command is the host and determined nine locations qualify for joint status. The locations and their future designations are:

Dobbins Joint Air Reserve Base, Ga.;
Grissom JARB, Ind.;
Homestead JARB, Fla.;
March JARB, Calif.;
Minneapolis-St. Paul JARS, Minn.;
Niagara Falls JARS, N.Y.;
Pittsburgh JARS, Pa.;
Westover JARB, Mass.; and
Youngstown JARS, Ohio.

"The primary change is simply to insert 'joint' in the installation title," said Thomas Hovey, chief of civil engineer operations at Headquarters AFRC. "No other relationships will change.

"We are compiling data from the installations and plan to submit one package to the Air Staff," he said. "Our goal is to publish special orders and complete the process by July 31."

Homestead is a special case, since action is on going to convert it from an air station to an air reserve base with the signing of a supplemental record of decision. This action officially transfers the airfield to the Reserve, according to Hovey.

"This will take effect after completing the property documentation transfer from Air Combat Command and publishing Air Staff special orders," he said. "We anticipate this action to be completed by June 30."

One AFRC installation that's not changing its designation is Gen. Mitchell International Airport ARS in Milwaukee. The Reserve's 440th Airlift Wing is the host, and there are no major tenants assigned as part of the installation. Although, the Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing shares the same airfield, it is on a separate installation. (AFRC News Service)

Tabuk, from the ground up!

By SSgt. James Orbin
914th Public Affairs

What would you do if you were assigned to duty in the Middle East desert region and found nothing but sand and wind? Lt. John Stolfo and CMSgt. Gerald Leo, along with a few hundred Niagara deployed personnel, did just that. The 328 EAS landed in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia to find little or no accommodations to operate a combat support base for Operation Iraqi Freedom. "We had minimal resources from the host nation, even though there was a Saudi airbase there," stated CMSgt. Leo, "We only had access to a runway and command post, everything else we had to build."

The popular phrase, "If you build it, they will come" from the movie Field of Dreams, proved to be useful for deployed 914th personnel. The base was very large in area with the need to commute from one area to another. "Troops had no idea what to expect when they arrived here," said CMSgt. Leo. "We knew the base was severely undermanned with CE (Civil Engineers), but things worked out for us. We saw the equipment and pitched in. We had to supply most of our own equipment, but we were able to rent vehicles from the downtown area." Lt. Stolfo stated "I was impressed with the teamwork between reserve and active units; our base flight crews were augmented to CE based on civilian skills in electrical, plumbing, and use of heavy equipment, while still doing their flying missions."

Being in the desert, no one could get away from the sand and wind. "The sand was really bad, nothing was exempt from being damaged," Chief Leo stated, "There was nothing you could do to get away from the sand. The noise from the wind pelting the sand against the tents, made it seem like the tents were going to be torn apart." The temperatures in Tabuk were in the 90's and dry, however, the evenings were cool and sleeping bag use was common at night by many.

"The base actually started with very few people," stated Lt. Stolfo, "At the very peak, our base had an occupation close to 4,000 military personnel. This included other branches of the U.S. services. When the mission was completed and individuals started redeploying back home, the number of individuals at the base decreased dramatically. I was very happy to see the troops going back home." "Awesome!" said Lt. Stolfo, "I felt great about our mission and how we took care of business. When I arrived there was nothing, then a whole base. After all was accomplished, we left the desert the way we arrived, sand and wind."



Left to right standing: Maj. Pete Straight (co-pilot), CMSgt. Gerry Leo (flight engineer), Maj. Mark Ables (pilot), TSgt. Matthew Butts (loadmaster), Maj. Dave Re (navigator), and TSgt. Dave Sargent (loadmaster) at Baghdad International Airport, Iraq. Photo by MSgt. Peter Borys.



Lt. Col. Mark Murphy (left) TSgt. Mike Zimmerman, and SMSgt. Jerry McNelis at Kandahar, Afghanistan. Deployed Niagara flight crews flew missions into Iraq and Afghanistan in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Photo by MSgt. Peter Borys.



Entertainer Wayne Newton poses on the flight deck of a Niagara C-130 with TSgt. Ted Balbierz. Newton and other celebrities were transported to Iraq for a USO show.



FATHERS AND SONS: From left, Staff Sgt. Tim McNelis, a C-130 crew chief, and his father, Senior Master Sgt. Jerry McNelis, a C-130 loadmaster, and Senior Master Sgt Chris Pfeil, a C-130 loadmaster, and his son, 1st Lt. Chris Pfeil Jr., a C-130 pilot, were deployed from Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, N.Y., to the 320th Air Expeditionary Wing in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. (Air Force Photo by Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith)

Like father, like son in Southwest Asia

By Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith

320th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA – The decision to follow their fathers into the military wasn't a difficult one for 1st Lt. Chris Pfeil Jr. and Staff Sgt. Tim McNelis, both from the 914th Airlift Wing, Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, N.Y.

"I was introduced to it very young," said Chris Jr., a C-130 pilot with the 772nd Expeditionary Airlift Squadron. "So joining the military was always something I kept in the back of my mind."

Pfeil said his father, Senior Master Sgt. Chris Pfeil Sr., a C-130 loadmaster also assigned to the 772nd EAS, never pressured him, but set an example for him to follow.

"It had to be his decision," said Chris Sr., "and it was important to support him in whatever he chose to do."

"I've always wanted to fly, and this was the best decision," Chris Jr. said, "but he never pushed it."

For Tim, a C-130 crew chief who was assigned to the 320th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, it was his father's advice against joining another branch of the service that encouraged him to try the Air Force Reserve Command.

"He wanted to join the Marines at first, and then he talked about the Army," said Senior Master Sgt. Jerry McNelis, a C-130 loadmaster with the 772nd EAS, "but I talked him out of it."

Tim said he's happy with the decision he made to join the Reserve because it allowed him to continue with school, and two years ago he was hired as a full-time air reserve technician.

He also is happy he's had the opportunity to deploy with his father in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

"It's good to have a family member here," Tim said. "You always have someone to talk to."

Knowing that his father will be flying on one of his aircraft also makes him want to go that extra step.

"It gives me the incentive to work that much harder knowing my dad is on my plane," he said.

For the Pfeils, being deployed here together has given both of them peace of mind.

"Any parent or child is going to be concerned," said Chris Sr., "but when Chris went on a mission, chances are I was there the day before so I knew the environment and what could expect and that helped."

Having each other to lean on during the deployment has been a benefit for both father/son teams, and for the fathers it's an opportunity to see their children follow that much closer in their footsteps. (AFRC News Service)

Home at last!



Photos By: TSgt. Chris Boswell

What's New in Services?

By Mr. Jerry Slipko
914th Services Marketing Director

We hope everyone is enjoying the summer season. With that in mind, the Services IT&T office has many discount tickets that will cool you off. If you are a thrill seeker, you may want to go on the famous Whirlpool Jet Boat. This boat roars through the Niagara Gorge over 50 mph. Also, we have tickets to Six Flags Darien Lake, Fantasy Island, and the Erie County Fair. If you would prefer a more relaxed type of atmosphere, you may want to check out the Buffalo Zoo, the Albright Knox Art Gallery or the Niagara Aerospace Museum. You can purchase all of these discount tickets through the Services IT&T Office. For

more information, please contact the Services IT&T office at 236-3367.

It is not too early to start thinking about the Buffalo Bills football season. The Services IT&T Office is going to host a Services excursion to a Bills game versus the Indianapolis Colts on 23 Nov 03. Tickets are only \$50.00 each which includes the game ticket (seats are in the endzone, 3 rows from the field), food during the tailgate party, and transportation to and from the Base. To reserve your tickets, please call the Services IT&T office. We require a \$5.00 deposit per ticket. Order your tickets today because they are going fast.

From 18 Aug to 31 Oct, the Falcon Club is going to be conducting an Air Force membership drive called "Travel The World on Us". A current and a new club member from the AFRC will have the possibility of winning four different types of travel packages. The Grand Prize is valued at

\$5000.00. You can become a club member by just stopping by the Falcon Club to fill out an application.

The Annual Guard/Reserve Base Golf Tournament will be held sometime in August. We have not yet formalized a date and location for the tournament. Once we have a date and a location, we will notify everyone. Also in August, Recreation Services will be conducting its first annual Military and Law Enforcement Softball Tournament. For more information about these tournaments, please contact Mike Williams at 236-2450.

We hope that all of you have enjoyed reading the new bi-monthly Services publication called the Services STAR. This free publication is available in all Services facilities. Please support the STAR's advertisers because they have helped reduce the publication costs.

General receives national award for fathers

WASHINGTON – The commander of Air Force Reserve Command joined a large, select group of men June 5 at the 61st Annual Father of the Year Awards ceremony in New York City.

Lt. Gen. James E. Sherrard III was one of six men this year selected as a National Father of the Year by the National Father's Day Committee.

"As a father, military leader, mentor and communicator, your contributions to family and society have had an enormous influence," wrote Stuart Goldblatt, committee chairperson, in a letter to the general. "It is for these reasons you were nominated for this honor."

During the ceremony in the New York Marriott Marquis Hotel, Sherrard expressed heartfelt gratitude and acknowledged the sacrifices made by service members and their families. He accepted the award not just for himself but also for all military fathers.

"It is an honor to be recognized for the National Father of the Year award, and I proudly accept it on behalf of all military fathers," Sherrard said. "The support of family is extremely critical to military members, and this award recognizes the great support of families and communities."

Sherrard also thanked his wife, Marsha, for the support she has provided to him and their family and spoke of lessons learned from his father as a young man.

Each year the National Father's Day Committee selects a handful of men to represent fathers in the United States. Three hundred eighty-six men have been chosen for this honor since 1944. Past recipients include presidents, senators, governors, mayors, generals, clergy, entertainers, news anchors and professional athletes. Among the recipients are Presidents Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, and Gens. Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf.

Other recipients of the 2003 National Father of the Year award are Joseph Abboud, fashion designer; Grit Young, accepting for Steve Young, retired NFL quarterback; Arnold "Woody" Woodall, heating/air conditioning executive; Patrick Ewing, retired NBA superstar; John Walsh, host of America's Most Wanted and The John Walsh TV Series; Len Berman, sportscaster and master of ceremonies; and Raymond W. Kelly, City of New York police commissioner.

The National Father's Day Committee is a non-profit organization that seeks to enhance the meaning of Father's Day and to promote traditional family values. (AFRC News Service)



Lt. Gen. James E. Sherrard III, commander of Air Force Reserve Command, addresses fellow National Father of the Year Award recipients and guests at the New York Marriott Marquis in New York City June 5. (Courtesy Photo)

914th Airlift Wing

PROMOTIONS

To Senior Master Sergeant
Robert Healy, 914 SFS



To Master Sergeant
John Langer, 914 SFS



To Technical Sergeant
Brian Moore, 914 SFS
Chad Sensor, 914 SFS



To Senior Airman
Daniel Binkowski, 914 MS
Dawn Daniels, 30 APS
Joseph Frischholz, 30 APS
Marc Kowal, 914 MS
Trina Showers, 914 CES
Brian Stalker, 914 MS



To Airman
Ashley Dixon, 328 AS
Andrew Lahrs, 914 SFS
Christopher Pettit, 914 SFS
Chelsea Raymond, 328 AS
Jordan Romney, 914 CES
Robert Welch, 328 AS

Airmen reminded to update vRED

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER – Five months since the official turn-on of the Virtual Record of Emergency Data, more than 383,000 airmen have updated their emergency contact information. But while this number is impressive, there's more work to be done.

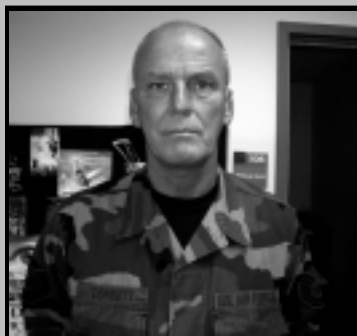
"It's imperative we have every airman – active duty, Guard and Reserve – fill out their emergency contact information," said Maj. Jerry Couvillion, chief of the casualty services branch here. "The information is essential for our casualty notification teams in case an airman becomes incapacitated or worse yet, killed."

Better known as vRED, this mandatory online form replaced the paper DD Form 93, Record of Emergency Data, as the only means available for airmen to provide personal emergency information. By filling out the form from any internet connected computer, Air Force casualty has immediate access to critical information needed to contact family members if an airman becomes missing, suffers a serious illness or injury, or dies.

Man on the street

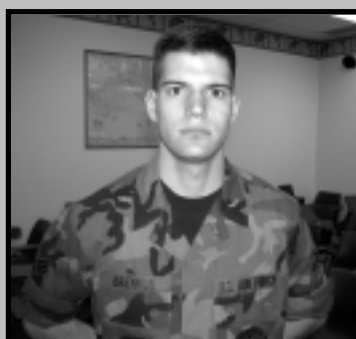
By MSgt. Joseph Cyran

The following was asked of unit members during the June UTA: "Considering current events, will this year's 4th of July celebration be different for you?"



TSgt. Michael Corbett, 914 MSF

"It will have special meaning for my family and I because of the active duty that I am pulling (second year of activation) and the events that are taking place throughout the world. With members of the 914th currently deployed also gives special meaning."



SrA Thomas Brenkus, 914 ASTS

"Yes. Knowing that I helped out-process members of the 914th to the Middle East, and realizing the overall positive support by the public for our troops serving world-wide."



Lt. Col. James Germain, 914 AES

"I don't think it will be different from last year but it will be different from the year before. (We're) still in the mode that we went into for 9-11. Since that time there has been an attitude change in the entire country. I will be thinking about the troops who were deployed, the troops still deployed and those not coming back."



SrA Daniel Owczarczak, 914 SFS

"This is the first 4th of July that I have been in the service. I joined in August then completed basic and tech school. With the war going on I've always been patriotic but being a part of the 914th and supporting the troops in the Middle East adds special meaning."

"Accurate and current family contact information prevents unnecessary delays," said Major Couvillion. "It also avoids hours or even days of uncertainty during which casualty teams are sometimes left to track down next of kin."

New procedures say all members should update their information electronically every six months, prior to deployments, and after permanent changes of station.

"Once the member initially completes the form, they will be able to go in at any time and update specific information as needed," he said. "It's simple and it saves time over the old paper form."

On the AFPC web page, www.afpc.randolph.af.mil, people can select the "vMPF" logo at the top of the page. New vMPF users will need to establish an account.

The online application, which will take most people about 20 minutes, asks questions such as what relatives should be contacted and what their addresses are.

For more information about the vMPF or vRED call the Air Force Contact Center toll-free at 1 (866) 229-7074. POC here at the base is the MPF Customer Service Section, 236-2197.

Frontiersmen are back from the front

By MSgt. Tom Allocco
439th Public Affairs

Six C-130s and about 160 members of the 914th AW, the Frontiersmen, of Niagara Falls, returned to American soil from almost four months in the Iraqi Freedom AOR when they recently landed at Westover Air Reserve Base. The aircrews, maintainers, aerial porters and others had conducted missions in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries in the AOR.

Some family members were among those who greeted them at the Westover Passenger Terminal. Following the Westover welcome, the Western New Yorkers were treated to a chicken wing and pizza picnic.

The following morning the six C-130s from the AOR and a seventh from Niagara Falls, flown by wing commander, Col. Wade Farris, took off and flew in formation to Niagara Falls.

Photos By: MSgt. W.C. Pope



Niagara Frontiersman



Photo By: Ms. Kim Ronan

The Niagara Frontiersman is printed for unit members and people like Patrick Parkot. Patrick is the son of Paul Parkot, DOD policeman here at Niagara. Major Christian Ulmer, 914 Security Forces Commander, gave the oath of enlistment to Patrick as he hopes to follow in his fathers footsteps and become a law enforcement officer.

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Headquarters Bldg. 800 Kirkbridge Drive
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"One heart, one hope, one destiny, one flag from sea to sea."

- Kate Brownlee Sherwood